

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Tuesday, May 28. 1706.

WHat now! *Say'd an honest Fellow reading the last Review*, what's the Matter now? The Review is tack'd about here; he's for the *French*, and tells us, we shall not besiege their Towns; and they will *make a stand* again, and the like, I don't like him, he talks for the Enemy.

'Tis very true, Gentlemen, I am of Opinion, nothing can please the King of *France* better at this time, than to see the Confederates sit down before some strong Town in *Flanders*, the bigger the better, and glad he would be to loose two or three of the best Towns there to have the Summer Wear of, and the Winter Recess of Action give him a Harbour to refit in.

And in order to this, 'tis certain, he will draw all possible Force together to make a bold stand some where, and being posted

with Advantage, cover the Country from the Invasions of the Confederates.

But having thus supposed, what the *French* may do, let us now come to a Conjecture, what the Duke of *Marlborough* may do also, and I must confess, if I may be capable of presumptive Guesses, and draw Projects at this Distance to me; it seems very plain, that if one Method was taken, the *French* must abandon all the *Low Countries*, to form an Army to defend his own.

I shall explain my self thus, I observ'd, that *Monhier Overkirk* in his Letter to the States General proposes, strengthening the Army by Detachments from their Frontier Towns, *which are now out of Danger*, to enable the Generals to prosecute their Victory, the *French* being drawing down strong Detachments, &c. to strengthen themselves.

If these Orders are executed, as we are since told they are preparing to do, the Confederates may be capable to divide their Forces. Monsieur Overkirk with 45000 Men will be more than sufficient to face the best Troops, the French can bring together, their Want of Horse especially consider'd, leaving such a Force then on the Frontiers; his Grace the Duke of Marlborough with 25000 of the Flower of the Troops, English, Scots, and Dunes, has a free Passage thro' lower Flanders, leaving Ipres, and St. Omer on the left, Dunkirk and Graveling on the right, clear into Picardy.

Now, because I would not speak so unsoldier like, as not to take notice, that the greatest Generals have never thought fit to venture into an Enemies Country, and leave the strong Towns behind them; I shall make it out, that the Case differs here extremely; and that on this Score in particular, this is the only place by which the Kingdom of France may be entred without a Siege.

The Reason why it is unsafe to leave strong Towns in our Rear upon any such Expedition, is, because the numerous Garrisons of such Towns lie always ready to intercept the Convoys, and cut off the Provisions for the Army, and in case of Disaster make a Retreat difficult. — But all this is answer'd here; for as soon as ever the Duke shall enter Picardy, he has nothing to do but to take Calais or Bologne, and the English Navy is at hand to supply him with all manner of Stores, Provisions, Train of Artillery, &c. and to land 10 or 12000 Men, which lye now ready in England to embark and joyn him.

Could I suppose such a thing as this attempted, and the Duke once entred Picardy at the Head of an English Army, what might we not expect! If the French drew down out of Flanders to face him in France, Monsieur Overkirk would be at their Heels to joyn him, with what Force he wanted.

And what would a French Army do in Picardy? there are no strong Towns to defend, and fighting in the Field will not do their Business; that is plain, and their own Experience will acknowledge it.

This would certainly be touching the French in a most sensible part, and the Consequences of it would immediately be felt both in Italy, on the Rhine, and to the utmost Extent of the French Conquests, from whence they must immediately recall such Numbers of their Men, as to put them upon the Defensive on all sides, where they now press their Enemies with unequal Forces.

It has been very well worth Observation, with what Dexterity the King of France has on all occasions secur'd his own Kingdom; that in all this and the last War, the Confederates have never been able to set a Foot in it, except a small push about Ambrun, which the Duke of Savoy made in or about the Year 1696, and which he afterward paid dear for at the Battle of Marsaglia.

But generally speaking, the French have always made War, at the Cost and on the Lands of their Enemies, and 'tis a great Thought, but to reflect, how much must you win back before he looses all, he has got above his own.

I hope we are in a fair way to clear his Hands of the Spanish Monarchy; but, I must tell you, that unless Prince Eugene is speedily reinforc'd, France is able to stand on the Defensive in Italy, and yet detach 30000 Men from thence to the Upper-Rhine, to make good the large Detachments with Monsieur, the Marschal de Villars must make for the Netherlands.

On the Rhine, he has a vast Tract of Land and invincible Fortresses to defend, he has all Alsace and the Country between the Rhine and the Moselle, all the strong Places upon the Saar, and the Moselle, all Lorrain, and the Country beyond the Meuse; these he has to fight for, and to loose Inch by Inch, before you set a Foot in France.

In Flanders, on the side of the Sambre, and the Meuse, he is barricaded with strong Garrisons, too many to talk of entering that way; I see no way to enter France like this above-mention'd, — for here all the Garrisons behind them are of no Consequence; the Sea is their Supply; the Ship-
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are their Bread-Wagons; and all *England* is their Magazine. They have an open and plentiful Country before them, and may extend themselves, whether they please, to the inexpressible Terror of the Enemy, and the Destruction of his Subjects; who in that part have nothing to screen them from a victorious Army; no Retreat, no Place of Strength capable of making any Resistance, or of securing their Effects.

I know 'tis objected against such a Project as this, that 'tis ill trusting an Army of brave honest Fellows in an Enemies Country without Magazines, that the Varieties and Uncertainties of a Sea Supply, were we never so certain and safe as to the Enemies, are such as to Wind and Weather, that it is not to be undertaken on that Score; but methinks the Uncertainty here is not so great, where the Distance is so small, that from *Dover* to *Bologna* cannot be above 4 Hours Sail.

I cannot therefore see any Danger in the Duke of *Marlborough's* venturing to do thus, it is what King *William* never had an Opportunity to do, viz. to enter *France*, and leave all the strong Towns on their Frontiers behind them; and I cannot but conceive, that it is the only way to touch the King of *France* in a most sensible Part.

At least, this would have two Sorts of Effects. 1. It would remove the Seat of War from a Country embarrassed with strong and most invincible Fortresses, and an incredible Number of them too, to an open Champion and fruitful Country, in which they should find all open and free.

2. This shall alter the way of fighting, and making War now will be no longer by skulking in Holes and Corners, entrenching encamping, and working hard under the Cannon of strong Towns; but must now be carried on by meer Blows, fair down right fighting, and a War like that of the antient *English* and *French*, viz. in the open Field.

It is plain, that at this manner of fighting, the *French* are not a Match for the Confederates, no not on any side. We never find, whether *Germany*, *Italy*, *Flanders*, or any where else; but the *French* gene-

rally, if not universally shun coming to a Battle; if their Enemies are but equal in Number, or but near equal; and 'tis as Evident, that the Confederates on such occasions generally seek Battle. This I think is a true, and most certain Signal, that the *French* themselves are conscious of the Superiority of the Confederates with Respect to the Goodness of their Troops; and that upon the Square, they are not a Match for us, and this is a double Motive to the Confederates, if possible to bring them to a Necessity of fighting without the Assistance of Entrenchments, Defiles, Rivers, and the Refuges of strong Towns, &c. to make good their Retreat.

Could this be brought to pass, this War would soon be brought to a happy Conclusion; I mean such a Conclusion, as all honest Men wish for, viz. A PEACE of which I shall say more in the next Papers.

I cannot however but take notice here, how every Days News still prompts us to think this Project more and more feasible. The *French* seem every day more than other to be opening the Door to this Attempt. We are now inform'd, they have quitted *Ghent*, and *Bruges* all Men will allow, must fall of Course; being no way able to stand the Confederates; and being abandon'd of the *French*, who as the last Advices inform us, are retir'd towards *Courtray*, and talk of repairing their old Lines, and defending themselves behind them; so that the small Places of *Deynse*, *Dixmuid*, *Furnes*, and *Winoxberg*, must open their Gates, and submit, and nothing can interrupt the March of an Army into *France*.

I know some People, who, on all Occasions are supporting the Wisdom and Policy of *France*, represent them still as invulnerable on this or any other side, and very much slight all Discourses of this kind, charge us with Ignorance of the *French* Strength, and of the Conduct of their Affairs.

They tell us, and no doubt 'tis true, that the present Weakness of *France*, if it may be call'd so, consists in the Extent of their Conquests; that whenever he pleases to contract him-

himself into a narrow Compass, and reduce his Forces into the Circumference of his own Frontiers, we shall find him another Sort of a Prince, than we imagine; that there is a great Deal of Difference between the King of *France* defending his own Country, and the King of *France's* garrisoning all the Towers in *Spain, Italy, Milan, the West-Indies, the Islands of the Mediterranean, and the Spanish Netherlands.*

That whenever he pleases to retreat within himself, he will face you with 300000 Men in Arms, and convince you, that *France* is not to be conquer'd by all the Power of *Europe.*

That therefore the Attempts of breaking into *France* are but wild Chimeras, which may serve indeed to amuse our selves; but we shall not find them so easily put in Practice, as we imagine.

I do readily grant the power of *France* to be very great, and that when contracted, it will make great Efforts in Defence of its own proper Dominions; but then 'tis this Contraction of Power, within its own Dominions, which we seek and fight for, and pressing into the proper Dominions of the *French*, will be the only Step to bring it to pass.

This is what we call reducing *France*, I believe no body in their Wits propose, reducing the Kingdom of *France*, as a Spoil of Conquest, and dividing it among the Confederates, that's an Attempt I shall take some Leisure to speak to, not doubting, but there may be time for it, before the bringing it to pass.

But breaking into *France*, is certainly the only Step to reduce them to a necessity of quitting their Invasions and Depredations upon other People, by bringing them home to defend their own; this is the way to make them contract their Power to due and proportion'd Bounds, and to bring them to Terms of Safety and Peace, the main thing all the honest Part of the Confederacy drive at.

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